

My name is Frank Maturo, I live in Darien, and I am part of a group called CT Alimony Reform. I testified last year in favor of Bill 5509 to try and bring the divorce laws in CT into the 21st Century. We did not come out of committee last year, but we are thankful and appreciative to the chairmen of the Judiciary Committee, Representative Fox and Senator Coleman, in putting together a Commission to study the alimony statutes and make recommended changes. We thank, in particular, members of the Judiciary Committee, Representative Klarides and Representative Baram, for being part of this Commission and leading the effort on the Bill. (Thank you also for not recusing yourself from my presentation to the Commission.)

I support the recommendations in both Bill 6688 & 1155. The Commission Bill of 6688 is good, and we support it, but would like to have seen further changes. However, there is some wording in there that I would hope could move us toward eliminating lifetime alimony and giving all spouses a right to retire. These bills are an important first step and a good start. It is great to see these bills have finally brought the alimony statutes into the present day by using the term “spouse” instead of “husband” or “wife”. It is also significant to see statutes that give guidelines to **amount** of alimony. I thought section 5 (c) in Bill 1155 was a well-authored paragraph outlining a mathematical formula for calculating alimony.

What we don’t understand is why the Commission and the sponsors of Bill 1155 didn’t go further, and put in another much needed paragraph outlining a mathematical formula for the **duration** of alimony. We are not against alimony, but believe it should be awarded for a reasonable length of time based on the length of the marriage, and the income and assets of the parties. Everyone should have the right to retire and end payments, without being impoverished. Today judgments differ wildly from county to county and judge to judge. I commend the Commission and sponsors of Bills 6688 and 1155 for what they have put into these two bills, and fully support them coming out of the Judiciary and heading to the legislative floor.

Another positive was the change in wording in the Cohabitation statutes. As I testified last year, this is the one area where even the most vociferous family lawyers against reform agree that the cohabitation laws as they stand today make no sense and need major improvement. Encourage people to form families, not live together indefinitely because one wants their ex-spouse to continue to keep making payments. The Bill 1155 makes worthwhile changes.

Many in the Family Law section of the CBA will be against these Bills. Why wouldn't they support what two bipartisan representatives and three judges (one a retired Supreme Court justice) recommend to improve family law in the State of CT? It is because more certainty and predictability on the outcome in a divorce is **not** what they want to see.

We have come together under The National Parents Organization in support of these two Bills to improve the statutes related to the dissolution of marriage and award of alimony. It is very clear that with the group here supporting Bill 6685 regarding Shared Custody, that the Family Law system in the State of CT is broken. We said it last year, and it is clear when you consider all three of these Bills, the degradation in the Family Law courts has continued.

All these Bills help reduce conflict, litigation, and acrimony. That is what is most important as it relates to the children. It all comes back to the children at the end of the day. Improve the system, and given the prevalence of divorce, we improve countless lives. Please pass Bill 1155 and 6688 (and 6685). Bills 1155 and 6688 were authored by thoughtful, knowledgeable, and dedicated people who work within the system and understand the issues. There is no reason why both these Bills should not move forward.

Thank you again for your time this year.